



---

## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

---

Local Government Center • 60 Community Drive  
Augusta, Maine 04330-9486  
1-800-452-8786 (In Maine) • 207-623-8428  
Fax 207-626-5947

Date: June 2, 2017

To: Senator Garrett P. Mason, Senate Chair  
Representative Louis J. Luchini, House Chair  
And members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Kathy Montejo, Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association  
City Clerk, City of Lewiston

Re: LD 1625 – An Act To Repeal the Ranked-Choice Voting Law

Position: NFNA

The Maine Town and City Clerks' Association is Neither For Nor Against LD 1625. We do however wish to offer some comments for your Committee to review and consider regarding the logistical challenges and projected costs of implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Maine:

### ISSUES REGARDING EXPENSE OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- 1) The City of Portland determines their Mayoral race by RCV tabulation. They budget \$30,000 to hire an outside company to determine the election results for this race. This is the cost for one race in one city.
- 2) As you know, there are only about 11 election jurisdictions around the country that currently use RCV to determine election results for some positions. That is 11 out of approximately 88,000 municipalities and counties in the US.
- 3) The equipment (software and hardware) used to determine election results via RCV is highly specialized and highly limited, given that only 11 jurisdictions need to use this equipment.
- 4) The State has a contract with Elections Systems and Software (ES&S) for the voting machines currently in use in Maine. These machines (software and hardware) cannot currently accommodate RCV tabulations.
- 5) ES&S does not offer RCV tabulation options – they would need to develop this software and hardware.
- 6) A ballot with a race determined by RCV is laid out differently than a ballot with races that are not determined by RCV. Therefore, we may need to have two separate state ballots for each election. This is costly for printing and for mailing out absentee ballots.
- 7) In Maine, only towns with a population of over 1,000 have voting machines. Towns with less than 1,000 do not have machines and manually tally

**Representing Over 400 Municipalities**



---

## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

---

Local Government Center • 60 Community Drive  
Augusta, Maine 04330-9486  
1-800-452-8786 (In Maine) • 207-623-8428  
Fax 207-626-5947

their election results by a hand count. It is highly problematic to effectively and efficiently determine a RCV result by a hand count. Therefore, many additional towns will need to have voting equipment that they currently do not have.

### ISSUES REGARDING LOGISTICS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- 8) Maine would be the first and only jurisdiction to have RCV used to determine races that cover multiple districts. Currently each jurisdiction with RCV is a sole district – the races are citywide but not split districts (one mayor in one city). Maine would be the first place to use RCV to determine election results with ballots from many towns but for one race. For instance, Rep. Seth Berry represents House District 55 and this is comprised of three towns – Bowdoinham, Bowdoin and Richmond. In order to determine the results for his seat, the ballots from all three towns would need to be tallied together for an accurate RCV result. This means all of the ballots from those three towns would need to be combined and run through the special RCV machine in order to determine the results. As such, these ballots would need to be transported to a central place. That involves cost of transportation, security, etc.
- 9) Multiply the above by every State Senate district, every State Representative district and every county race. The logistics and cost of this are almost improbable to imagine.
- 10) In Portland, it takes the outside company about two days to determine the results of the Mayoral race because the ballots have to be run through the machines multiple times after the polls close, in order to determine the votes (candidate with the lowest number of votes gets dropped off the list and the ballots are run through again). This is for ONE race. Imagine applying that to every race in the state. It is possible it could take weeks for the statewide election results. Again – there is very limited equipment in the country to handle this because there are only 11 places that use this system. So it is not a matter of simply bringing in more machines to Maine to handle the volume because there are not that many machines available in the first place.
- 11) Municipalities will not be determining the results of their local races by RCV. If RCV is implemented for state races, there is an issue of incompatible voting machines. Towns will need to purchase or lease a separate voting machine system to tabulate the local ballots. This will involve increased costs to communities and the use of two different software and hardware systems.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments today with the Committee. The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association appreciates the opportunity to share its testimony with the Committee. Should any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at 513-3124 or by email: [kmontejo@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:kmontejo@lewistonmaine.gov)